

Classis Matters

March April 2015

Member Churches of Classis Georgetown

- ◆ Alive Ministries
- ◆ Baldwin Street CRC
- ◆ Bauer CRC
- ◆ Cottonwood Church
- ◆ EverGreen Ministries
- ◆ Fairway CRC
- ◆ First Hudsonville CRC
- ◆ First Jenison CRC
- ◆ Forest Grove CRC
- ◆ Friendship Chapel
- ◆ Georgetown CRC
- ◆ Hillcrest CRC
- ◆ Immanuel CRC
- ◆ Jamestown CRC
- ◆ Messiah CRC
- ◆ Ridgewood CRC
- ◆ Searchlight Ministries
- ◆ Trinity CRC
- ◆ Twelfth Avenue CRC
- ◆ Zutphen CRC



Praises . . . and Prayer requests

*~ pray with thanksgiving for
the beauty of springtime!*

*~praise God with the con-
gregation of Forest Grove
CRC as they make plans for
the grand opening of their
new worship facility on May
31.*

*~ rejoice with Ridgewood
CRC as they celebrate
God's faithfulness to them in
celebration of their 50th an-
niversary with events
throughout the next year.*

A Journey into Cross Cultural Ministry

It was a cool spring day in April of 2012, when the providence of God brought Rev. Ernest Umoh to the doors of Trinity CRC in Grandville. Ernest, a native of Nigeria, had no prior connection to Trinity, and Trinity had no prior knowledge of Ernest, but Ernest had a need that day, and God in his own good and mysterious way led him to knock on Trinity's door. And what started as a willingness to help Ernest get heat in his home after his gas had been turned off, turned into a beautiful and ever growing relationship between Trinity church and an expanding ministry to Somali Muslims in the Grand Rapids area.

It was soon evident that Ernest was a passionate evangelist with a real heart for showing the love of Christ to Muslims. He had no church building to call his own and no supporting church, so he used his own personal income and other resources to provide assistance to Somali refugees living in the Creston projects. Pastor Gerry and Ernest started talking together more often and soon began to develop a strong friendship built on mutual respect for each other. Trinity was invited to come alongside of Ernest in numerous ways, including helping him put on an annual carnival for families living in the project, purchasing a van for Ernest to use for ministry, and collecting Christmas gifts and school supplies for Somali families that were especially struggling.

When the Creston projects were torn down last year, many families that Ernest had been helping found themselves displaced so Ernest took on the additional ministry of helping these families find new places to live and obtain furnishings for their homes. Again, Trinity was blessed to be able to help with this ministry and blessed to be able to personally meet some of these families in the process. In the spring of 2014, Trinity held an Easter-themed carnival called Search for the Lamb. Somali families were invited and many Somali children participated in this event. It was such a blessing for Trinity to be able to minister to some Somalis right in our own church.

And now, after many years of praying and searching with Ernest for a ministry center where the Somali Christians can come together to worship on a regular basis, Trinity is again blessed to be part of seeing this prayer become a reality. If all goes as planned, Ernest hopes to hold a worship service in some rented office space in Wyoming on Easter Sunday!

Trinity hopes this is just the beginning of many more years of being able to support Ernest and this cross-culture ministry. It is so very exciting to hear of Muslims coming to Christ and such a blessing to build relationships with these beautiful people who teach us about a Kingdom of God that is so much greater and so much more diverse than our little square inch of West Michigan. *(This article was contributed by Kathy Jelsema of Trinity)*

Vision Statement Classis Georgetown

Classis Georgetown is a community of Christian Reformed Churches in Eastern Ottawa County who live and minister together, in Christ, to transform lives and communities.

Classis Values

Healthy Leaders

We equip leaders to transform lives and communities.

Collaborative Relationships

We call out the strengths of each church and pursue ministry together to create new ways of transforming lives and communities.

Empowering Worship

We celebrate and are sustained by God's presence as he transforms lives and communities.

Daring Hospitality

We welcome the stranger in ways that transform lives and communities.

Risky Compassion

We extend uncommon generosity to the suffering and work to eliminate the causes of that suffering in order to transform lives and communities.

CHURCH SIGN

**Prayer:
Don't give God
instructions,
Just report
for duty!**

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“God’s Already There”

In connection with 12th Avenue CRC’s 60th Anniversary last fall, the Rev. Mark Bennink preached a series of sermons about God’s faithfulness. At the beginning of those services, members were invited to share their testimonies about God’s faithfulness to them personally. Joy Poelman’s testimony follows.

Marv (her husband) and I have been members of 12th Avenue Christian Reformed Church for 12 years. Many of you know about God’s faithfulness to us during this time, with Laura’s hospitalizations, Marv having shingles and a hip replacement, and me having three orthopedic surgeries. God was faithful during these and other situations. Marv was my faithful care-giver.

The pastors (Pastor Laryn, the Rev. Van Wyk, Pastor Mark, Pastor Jim) and elders all confirmed God’s faithfulness through calls, cards, visits, and most of all through prayers. I felt enveloped with prayer during those times. Thank you! We also appreciated your many prayers for other members of our family, too. God’s faithfulness began long before we came here. When I was 12 years old I almost died while I was hospitalized with a strep infection that had settled in my glands. My sister, who brought me up, later told me that my doctor had told her at that time that he “didn’t know if I was going to make it,” but God knew—I’m here.

God’s faithfulness was very present when our 2 1/2 year old son, Jimmy, died from injuries he sustained in a 2 car collision. 3 1/2 year old Kathy was also injured. It was during that time that the Lord carried us. Jimmy’s death led more people to Jesus than I ever will if I live to be 100!

In the 1960’s my doctor’s standing orders began and lasted for several years, “Stay off your feet and spend as much time in bed as possible.” With 5 children this was a challenge. Again, God was faithful. Marv and the kids rose to the occasion and met that challenge with me and for me. I can’t thank God and my family enough.

At this time the Lord began giving me spontaneous poems. I’d be sweeping the floor or doing some other mundane task and I’d have to find pencil and paper to quickly write them down. Some came on wings of song, and I soon learned that if I didn’t share a song I’d lose it (isn’t that the way it is with everything the Lord gives us?), so I’d call my minister and sing it for him. Then he’d have me call another church member (a different one each time) and sing it for them. Invariably, that person would say, “That’s just what I needed.”

Seven years ago the Lord led our children to buy us a passive exerciser. Using this has made both of us stronger. Today I’m doing much

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better than I did 10 years ago. I can’t say I don’t have any pain (Marv can attest to that!), but I no longer have to take strong pain pills. God, in His faithfulness, has enabled me to do things that I was unable to do for years. I feel like God has given me a new lease on life.

Several weeks ago during one of his sermons, Pastor Mark said that “If God has done something for you, you need to share it,” so I’d like to share a song that the Lord gave me last year. God puts songs in my heart, but I don’t think he meant for me to be a soloist.



“God’s Already There”
Don’t worry about tomorrow.
God’s already there.
He always goes before you
And He hears your every prayer.
Yesterday He was with you.
Tomorrow He’ll be there.
In joy or in sorrow
He will share your every care.
Even if you’re feeling lonely
And there’s no joy in your heart,
This Friend will never leave you.
From you He’ll not depart.
Don’t worry about tomorrow.
God’s already there.
He always goes before you.
Praise God! He’s always there!

(Verses 1, 2, 3, 8, based on Philippians 4:13 and 19).
(Joy Poelman, member of 12th Avenue CRC, shared her testimony)

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